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Frederick County Health Department

# *News Release*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**OCTOBER 30, 2013**

## **HEALTH DEPARTMENT ADDRESSES RISE IN OPIOID OVERDOSE DEATH IN FREDERICK COUNTY**

**FREDERICK, MD--** The Frederick County Health Department would like to respond to recent reports in the media regarding the increase in opioid and opiate overdose deaths in our County. Substance abuse and drug overdoses are a serious public health issue across Maryland and in Frederick County. During the period of 2007-2012, there was an overall increase in overdose deaths in Frederick County. During that time period, there were a total of 134 fatal overdoses in Frederick County. In 2007 there were 22 fatal overdoses while in 2012 there were 25 deaths.

While the numbers have increased for all substances for which we have data, the primary culprit is opioids, specifically prescription opioids. The county had 12 opioid-related deaths in 2007 and a jump to 23 in 2012. Of those, prescription opioids saw the largest increase. There were 6 prescription opioid deaths in 2007, which rose to 16 in 2012.

**--more--**

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In order to address this serious public health issue, the Behavioral Health Services Division developed an overdose prevention plan based on analysis of local data, a local needs assessment, and identification of specific interventions and responses. The final plan was submitted to the Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene and has been approved for implementation.

The Overdose Prevention Plan calls for continuous collection and analysis of data from State and local sources, education of the clinical community on overdose prevention and resources, educating local physicians on Maryland's new Prescription Drug Monitoring Program, providing outreach to high-risk individuals and communities, and increasing awareness of local prevention, treatment and recovery resources.

In order to accomplish the goals outlined in the plan, the Frederick County Health Department has convened a workgroup comprised of members of the Frederick County Local Substance Abuse Council and Frederick County Mental Health Advisory Board. The members represent community mental health and addiction treatment providers and local government agencies, including law enforcement. The next Overdose Prevention Workgroup meeting will be held on Monday December 16<sup>th</sup>, at 3pm in the third floor meeting room of Winchester Hall.

The Frederick County Overdose Prevention Plan can be found on the Frederick County Health Department website under Behavioral Health Services:

<http://goo.gl/K8RM95>. For more information please contact Andrea Walker, Director, Behavioral Health Services Division at (301) 600-1755 or [awalker@frederickcountymd.gov](mailto:awalker@frederickcountymd.gov).

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